

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-10 and 12-20 are currently pending in the present patent application.

In the Office Action mailed December 13, 2007, the Examiner maintains his rejection of claims 1-7 as being obvious over U.S. patent 6,091,645 to Iadanza ("Iadanza") in view of Applicants Admitted Prior Art ("APA"). In Section B of the Office Action (pages 3-4), the Examiner discusses overflow data being shifted out of a given array and propagated to the next adjacent subarray with regard to the Iadanza reference.

Amended claim 1 recites, in part, a memory including a second operating configuration in which the memory elements in each sub-array are coupled to one another so as to form an independent monodimensional sequentially-accessible memory block, with the memory blocks of each sub-array being isolated from the memory blocks of the other sub-arrays and a data content of any memory element of the sub-array being rotatable by shifts through the memory elements of the sub-array.

As amended, claim 1 now expressly recites that the memory blocks of each sub-array are isolated from the memory blocks of the other sub-arrays. This language has been added to clarify the recited subject matter for the Examiner. The claim now recites, and previously recited, that a data content of any memory element of the sub-array is "rotatable" by shifts through the memory elements of the sub-array. The data contents of the memory elements in a given sub-array are "rotatable" which means that the data content remains within a given subarray and does not overflow into an adjacent sub-array. This is directly in contrast to the operation of Iadanza as discussed by the Examiner in Section B of the Office Action. Even though claim 1 previously recited that the data contents of the memory elements in a given sub-array are rotatable, the claim has nonetheless been amended to now expressly recite that the memory blocks of each sub-array are isolated from the memory blocks of the other sub-arrays. Each sub-array of Iadanza is not so isolated from the other sub-arrays, as is evident from the Examiner's own description of the Iadanza reference (see Section B of the Office Action).

For at least these reasons, the combination of elements recited in amended claim 1 is allowable. Dependent claims 2-7 are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1 and due to the additional limitations added by each of these dependent claims.

The Examiner also maintains his rejection of claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0087817 A1 to Tomaiuolo ("Tomaiuolo").

Amended claim 8 recites, in part, a memory including a control circuit coupled to the memory locations and operable to allow sequential access to the contents of the memory locations via a predetermined one of the memory locations during a second mode of operation, wherein the same predetermined one of the memory locations is used to allow sequential access to the contents of the memory locations. Once again, the amendments to claim 8 will hopefully clarify the recited subject matter for the Examiner. Neither Tomaiuolo nor the other art of record discloses or suggests the recited combination of elements and accordingly claim 8 is allowable. Dependent claims 9 and 10 are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 8 and due to the additional limitations added by each of these claims.

Independent claims 14 and 15 and dependent claims 16-20 are allowable for reasons similar to those just discussed with regard to claim 8.

With regard to claim 12, the Examiner states in Section C of the Office Action (page 4) that the recitation "the memory locations comprise rings ... with the contents of each ring be independent of the contents of the other rings ... the control circuit is operable to control each of the rings" is not supported by the original disclosure and the claim is susceptible to a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112 for containing new matter. The term "ring" need not be expressly used in the specification to be used in the claims. When read in view of the specification, one skilled in the art will clearly understand that one interpretation of the term ring corresponds to the monodimensional sequentially accessible memory blocks recited in claim 1. Since the contents of the memory elements of the sub-array forming a memory block are rotatable by shifts, it follows that the memory blocks may be termed "rings."

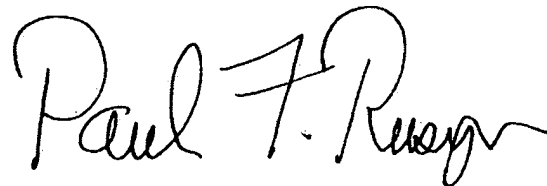
For at least these reasons, the combination of elements recited in claim 12 satisfy the first paragraph of Section 112. Furthermore, claim 12 is allowable over the art of record for reasons similar to those discussed above with regard to claim 8.

Finally, in Section D of the Office Action Examiner discusses the use of the language "operable to" in some of the claims. This language is perfectly permissible in patent claims and distinguishes over prior art structures that cannot perform the recited function. This language is does not define an intended use but instead means the structure must be capable of performing the recited function, and is thus distinguished from structures that are not so capable. For the reasons discussed above with regard to the various claim rejections, the structures disclosed in the references cited by the Examiner are not capable of performing recited functions.

The present patent application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and a Notice of Allowance are respectfully requested. **Should the Examiner have any further questions about the application, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to contact the undersigned attorney at (425) 455-5575 to arrange for a telephone interview to discuss the outstanding issues.** If the need for any fee in addition to any fee paid with this response is found, for any reason or at any point during the prosecution of this application, kindly consider this a petition therefore and charge any necessary fees to Deposit Account 07-1897.

Respectfully submitted,

GRAYBEAL JACKSON HALEY LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Paul F. Rusyn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Paul" being the most prominent.

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